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Agenda items 17 and 18

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 15 January 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In 2005, Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip with the hope that the Palestinians would govern the area responsibly. Regrettably, this did not happen. Since then my delegation has repeatedly warned that Gaza is turning into a launching pad for violence and terrorism. Over the past few years, and particularly in recent months, we have written to inform you of this fact. Since June 2007, when Hamas violently took control of Gaza, more than 1,000 Qassam rockets and mortar shells were fired at Israel. And Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups continue their quest to murder Israelis and destroy Israel.

As we have said before, Israel will not stand idly by as its citizens are under constant attack. Israel reserves the right to defend itself from all armed attacks, as any other nation would, according to its inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. My delegation has repeatedly pressed the United Nations to denounce all acts of violence and terrorism, and condemn States that aid and abet terrorists groups, which is a violation of their obligations under international law, as well as Security Council resolutions. Yet the violence continues and nothing is done to end terrorism or support for it.

In this light, I regret to inform you of two particularly alarming acts of terrorism which occurred today, and that underscore the urgency for action and the need to counter the violence from Gaza. Early this morning, a Palestinian terrorist shot and killed Carlos Andres Chavez, a 20-year-old volunteer from Ecuador, who was working in Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha, located near the coast in southern Israel. Later in the day, at least four people were wounded, including a woman and her five-year-old daughter after their home sustained a direct hit by a rocket in the southern town of Sderot. More than 25 Qassam rockets were fired by Palestinian terrorists. An additional 24 mortars were fired by Hamas and others.

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These vicious acts of Palestinian terrorism are indicative of the daily and fatal dangers facing Israeli civilians, particularly those living near the Gaza Strip. Normal life has been interrupted in Sderot, where there was no electricity for several hours today following the attack. While Israel remains committed to advancing the peace process — as demonstrated by the meeting yesterday between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, which continued in the spirit of Annapolis — the Palestinian Authority has not succeeded to effectively combat terrorism and fulfil its obligations under the various agreements, including the Road Map. As these two attacks remind us, Palestinian terrorism remains the greatest obstacle to peace and security in the region. The Palestinian leadership must stop the violence, dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, end the cycle of impunity, and bring the terrorists to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the contents of the present letter circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ambassador Daniel **Carmon**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.